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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 ANKARA 000535

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EUR/SE, EUR/PD, NEA/PD, DRL  
JCS PASS J-5/CDR S. WRIGHT

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: OPRC KMDR TU PREL KPAO

SUBJECT: Media Say Turkey and Azerbaijan Will Address Tensions Over  
Turco-Armenian Relations

FRIDAY, APRIL 10, 2009

In Today's Papers

Turkey and Azerbaijan Work to Reduce Tensions over Ankara's Armenia Initiative

Media outlets report an Azerbaijani delegation comprised of parliamentarians and NGO representatives will visit Ankara from April 15-18 to discuss ways to reduce the strains over Turkey's Armenia initiative. Mainstream Hurriyet reports a delegation from Turkey-Azerbaijan friendship group in the parliament will travel to Baku next week to meet with the Azerbaijani lawmakers, civic organizations and media members.

Hurriyet claims Baku has put forth three conditions before consenting to the normalization of ties between Turkey and Armenia, all of which are related to the withdrawal of Armenian troops from the "occupied Azerbaijani territory Nagorno Karabakh." Earlier this week, television news reports noted Prime Minister Erdogan held a news conference Wednesday evening and said, "The problems between Turkey and Armenia can be resolved after a settlement is reached on the Nagorno-Karabakh issue," and "We hope the UN Security Council names Armenia as the 'occupier' in Nagorno-Karabakh and calls for a withdrawal of Armenian troops. The Minsk Group has been unable to succeed in this effort over the last 17 years."

Editorial Commentary on Turkey-Armenia-Azerbaijan

Ferai Tinc wrote in mainstream Hurriyet: "In my earlier columns I had explained that the Azerbaijani people also should be told about the ongoing Turkey-Armenia rapprochement. There has been secret diplomacy between Turkey and Armenia over the last two years, and while Azerbaijani officials were informed of every step taken towards rapprochement, the Azerbaijani people were not informed about these developments. It is a complicated endeavor to communicate secret diplomacy successfully to the public, particularly when the topic is a hotly charged political topic like this one. In order to initiate changes in a country, first of all, the public should be convinced. Now, the Turkey-Armenia rapprochement process will continue. And, as President Obama

promised to President Aliyev on the phone, the Nagorno-Karabagh issue will come to the agenda as well. Turkey's Armenian approach will also be able to open the dead lock on the Karabagh issue, as long as it is not tackled by Azerbaijani leadership's weaknesses."

Sami Kohen wrote in mainstream Milliyet: "No one in Ankara plans to sacrifice Azerbaijan in order to improve ties with Armenia. Turkey never failed to inform Azerbaijan regarding the meetings it had with Armenia. Unfortunately, the recent speculations have caused a crisis of trust with Azerbaijan. Officials in Ankara say Turkey will not open Turkey-Armenia border before April 24. This problem has many angles and it is rather complicated. Moreover, many countries are involved, i.e., Turkey, U.S., Russia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, as well as the Armenian Diaspora. That is why it is not an easy problem to resolve. It will take time. As long as all right steps are taken by all the parties, in time, this issue will be resolved."

#### The AKP's Yakis: Halki Seminary Cannot be Reopened as a Private University

Mainstream Haberturk reports Yasar Yakis, the head of the parliamentary committee for EU harmonization, said "reopening the Greek Orthodox Halki Seminary in Istanbul as a private university would pave the way for similar demands from radical religious groups in Turkey." Yakis noted the constitution "does not allow private education institutions to train soldiers, police officers and clerics." He added that "the problem could be resolved by opening the seminary as part of a state university, but the Greek community in Istanbul rejects this formula."

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**\$45 Billon Coming from the IMF (Radikal)**  
Media outlets report Turkey was likely to get approximately USD 45 billion from the IMF following a new stand by deal reached with Turkey to cover a period of three years. State Minister for Treasury Mehmet Simsek said the IMF money "would help finance Turkey's foreign trade deficit." Liberal Radikal expects Turkey and the IMF to complete the draft of the deal within two weeks. Meanwhile, businessmen from Istanbul told the Islamist-oriented Zaman a loan of USD 45 billion would "harm Turkey's credibility in the eyes of foreign investors and global business circles," adding that "USD 20-25 billion would be enough for Turkey."

**Military and Interior Ministry Warns Governors against Activities of the U.S. Air Force Office of Special Investigations (Aksam)**  
Mainstream Aksam reports that after being notified by the Turkish General Staff (TGS,) the Interior Ministry has warned all governors' offices to "be careful to not give information to OSI agents" who were reportedly "asking for information from local officials prior the municipality elections held in late March." The ministry waited until the departure of President Obama from Turkey in order to avoid tensions in the issue, and sent a circular on April 7 to "warn" the governors. The TGS has reportedly told the Interior Ministry that OSI members were "paying visits to several local officials around the country," according to Aksam.

#### Editorial Commentary on the Aftermath of Obama's Turkey Visit and Turkey-EU Relations

Hasan Bulent Kahraman wrote in mainstream Sabah: "President Obama is trying to establish a new world order that is based on democracy. The Obama Era will be a very democratic period and Turkey will be expected to show the same sensitivity to democracy. It will be in Turkey's interest to improve democracy and not to oppose Obama. The major benefit Turkey received from Obama's visit was Obama's explanation on how to develop democracy."

Hikmet Cetinkaya wrote in leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet: "If it were former President Bush instead of President Obama who referred to Kurds as a minority, everyone would have reacted much more harshly. However, Obama is a sympathetic black leader so no one was disturbed. As a matter of fact, Obama outlined his demands to Turkey in his speech, namely his calls to reopen Halki-Seminary, to resolve problems in ties with Armenia, to deal with the events of 1915, and to cooperate with Kurdish leaders regarding the PKK issue,

etc. The Armenian lobby will never give up its efforts to have the 1915 incidents to be recognized as genocide."

Ali Bayramoglu wrote in Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak: The EU's has played an enormous role on Turkey's recent democratic reforms. Turkey, based on the Copenhagen Criteria, has carried out many reforms. A Turkey that adopts an enlightened approach on the Kurdish issue and that opens its border with Armenia will have better chance at quickly joining the EU. This is where the positive effects of Obama's visit come since he encouraged Turkey on these paths."

#### Opposition Takes to the Streets in Tbilisi, Gives President 24-Hour Warning

Media outlets remind that the same types of demonstrations used to bring Georgian President Saakashvili to power in 2003 are now being used to call for his resignation. Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet reports in "Resignation Pressure to Saakashvili," that "17 different opposition parties organized tens of thousands of people to demonstrate and call on President Saakashvili to resign." Cumhuriyet also reports, "Demonstrators accuse Saakashvili of mistaken policies that opened the way to Abkhazia and South Ossetia's secession and to war with Russia." Mainstream Hurriyet notes "100,000 people took to the streets of Tbilisi yesterday to call for Saakashvili's resignation." In addition, Hurriyet notes "Dorothy Stein, a masseuse to Hollywood stars, was brought by

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private plane to work as the Georgian President's masseuse," which "provided a trump card to the opposition," to criticize Saakashvili. Mainstream Sabah reports, "the same tactics used to bring Saakashvili to power six years ago are being used to call for his resignation." Islamist-oriented Zaman reports "The Opposition in Georgia is Also Mobilized," after anti-communist demonstrations reached the parliament building in Moldova. Liberal Radikal notes "Saakashvili Has One Foot in the Hole," as "the opposition has marched to parliament to call for Saakashvili's resignation," and former presidential candidate Leva Gacelidze declared "Our country has been separated, and we must throw him out of office." CNN Turk reports, "The opposition has given Saakashvili 24 hours to resign."

#### Protests Against U.S. Invasion of Iraq

Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet reports in "Protests Against the Invasion," that "Tens of thousands of Iraqis took to the square where the statue of Saddam Hussein was toppled in Baghdad in 2003," in order to "protest the sixth anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Iraq." Mainstream Sabah reports, "Supporters of Muqtada al Sadr demonstrated in the streets to demand the release of prisoners and the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq." Sabah also notes "In a symbolic effort, the protestors chanted slogans against the U.S. and burned posters in Firdev square, the location where the Saddam statue was brought down in 2003."

TV News (CNN Turk)

#### Domestic

- A Heritage Foundation report says the AKP appears to be moving Turkey away from its pro-Western and pro-American orientation to a more Islamist one.

- After 29 years, May 1 will be declared an official holiday in Turkey. Labor Minister Faruk Celik said a bill was submitted to the cabinet of ministers for approval before it was enacted in the parliament. Trade unions asked the governor's office for permission to hold their May Day celebrations at the Taksim Square in the heart of Istanbul.

- Police in Eskisehir detained 30 members of the "Selefi Group" which has links with al-Qaeda. Some of the suspects reportedly received training in Afghanistan years ago.

- Yasin Hayal, one of the masterminds of the slaying of Hrant Dink, has been sentenced to three years for bombing the McDonald's in Trabzon prior to the Dink murder.

- A survey by Turkey's Central Bank expects year-end inflation to stand at 6.57 percent.

#### World

- Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi announced the death toll from Monday's earthquake rose to 279, including 20 children. Berlusconi said earthquake reconstruction will cost several billion Euros.

- CIA director Leon Panetta says in a letter sent to agency employees the CIA is no longer operating secret prisons to interrogate terror suspects, and plans to shut all remaining "black sites."

- Syrian PM Muhammad Naji Otri met Turkish Justice Minister Mehmet Ali Sahin Thursday, discussing the prospects of enhancing the growing cooperation between the two countries.

JEFFREY